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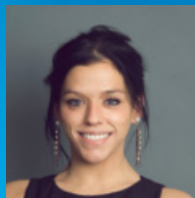
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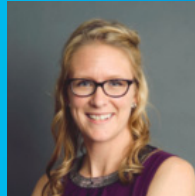
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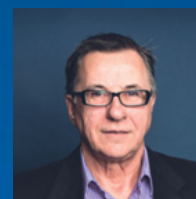
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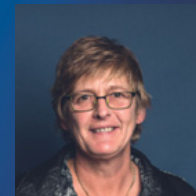
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"I think heroic deeds were all conceived in the open air"

by Will Nicholls

The quote above is from Walt Whitman's poem, "Song of the Open Road" – a cheerful 1856 tribute to freedom and the great outdoors.

I'm confident Whitman would have approved my use of the line to promote open, well-aired government. It's unlikely the great poet favoured government secrecy and closed-door meetings. As he also wrote, "Out of the dark confinement, out from behind the screen!"

For today's purposes, Whitman's "screen" represents the executive session – a self-important term for a classic oxymoron: closed public meetings. Too many elected band councils and boards seek every opportunity to meet out of sight of the public they serve. Some schedule executive sessions as a regular agenda item.

In most cases, executive sessions do not violate open meeting laws. The closed-door discussions are at times suggested or encouraged by an elected band's or a board of directors' legal counsel.

But legality and necessity are two different things.

In the spirit of Walt Whitman, the following should be taken as guidelines on the use of executive sessions by our band councils, Cree Nation Government, Cree-owned businesses, Cree government commissions, boards or entities – as well as school and health boards. Our membership should hold their elected officials and publicly owned organizations to the standards listed below in our Ten Commandments for Open Meetings, which are based on a similar list developed by Brian Hunhoff of South Dakota's Yankton County Observer, and modified here with his permission.

1. Do not gather as a quorum outside of regular meetings, and do not

hold special meetings without giving at least 30 days public notice.

2. Do not habitually add last-minute items to the agenda, and do not act on anything not listed on the posted agenda.

3. Do not abuse the litigation excuse for executive sessions to speculate about possible or imagined lawsuits.

4. Do not abuse the personnel excuse for executive sessions to discuss policy issues. Example: Creating a new position or changing a department's job descriptions are policy decisions and not appropriate topics for a closed meeting.

5. Avoid the "negotiations" excuse to suddenly exclude the public from discussion of controversial issues.

6. Do not allow executive session conversations to stray to other topics.

7. Do not violate the spirit of the open meeting law with frequent phone, email or text dialogues with other members.

8. Avoid whispering or passing notes at meetings. Tell members what you have to say out loud.

9. Allow public input at every meeting. Include it on every agenda.

10. Be as transparent as possible. Bring those financial documents to the meeting and make them public. We have a right to hold you accountable for your actions.

Ultimately, our representatives need to ask themselves, "Is it absolutely critical we discuss this privately?"

We appreciate our elected leaders and board members. They make tough decisions. They sometimes lose friends and make enemies. Their dedication to community and the Cree Nation is admirable. They often perform the "heroic deeds" Whitman celebrated in his poetry.

We simply ask that elected and appointed officials think twice before kicking the public out of public meetings.

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Willie's Place

A funny thing happened on the way to the future...

by Sonny Orr



Recently, the local news heralded the reopening of Chez Willie in Val-d'Or, which is now located a little ways from downtown. This is good: the poor homeless have a daytime sanctuary from the harsh realities on the streets of an urban land, far from the homes of the northern Cree, far from anything they can call home. Still, images of smiling people come from this depth of economic disparity and they have touched many peoples of all walks of life. Yes, there is a light to look forward to at the end of the tunnel called homelessness.

For many people who don't understand this situation and how this can be in modern-day treaty days. With a new nation formed from the damming of rivers and vast hydro-electric projects, this ironically made the very independent people of Eeyou Istchee homeless in their own lands. Today, we live a modern-day lifestyle far from any semblance of what we used to call our garden, the lands we harvested for a life without the chains of monetary systems.

The way we lived was far from impoverished, rich as it was with traditions and beliefs based on the natural order of life and the lands we occupied. When that was taken from us, we became homeless too, as our people struggled to find the right places to live, establish communities and adopt a modern-day lifestyle. One great tradition we maintained was our sense of humour, as laughter was always used as a way to deal with our transitions from sustenance lifestyles to a dependant lifestyle of free money and unearned pay cheques.

In a way, the urban homeless who come from our communities are still struggling with dealing with this intergenerational change, from the freedom of being your own person to one dependent on the help of others. I see these people who wander the streets of Val-d'Or and Montreal and it reminds me that the choices we made in the past have affected us in many ways today. But, while talking to some,

I always try to make someone laugh because I know that is a tradition they still retain, a trait that tends to take the edge off a long day of staying alive on the streets with no names.

At the other end of the spectrum, where the well-to-do or even middle class (for a lack of a better expression) survive just like the rest of ordinary Canadians – paying the rent, buying groceries, taking care of never-ending bills and living from one paycheque to the next – you will still see humour as the most affordable medicine.

Our past and traditions are now struggling to find a home in our modern lifestyles. I remember when our transition to the technological reality of cellphones, Internet, online shopping and Facebook was still in the future. We could still walk a mile in snowshoes and ride a two-stroke skidoo. Then we thought up ways to record the Elders before they died off. People laughed at our suggestion, refusing to believe that our way of life would ever be lost to our children and their children. It's no longer a funny notion, as we spend so much time and money trying to recover our lost memories of legends and the meanings behind those teachings.

Now, even though our culture is at risk, we are using the same technology to assist the survival of our language and culture through audio-visual means. Many tales are ribald and full of adult content, which are told with a wry smile from a wrinkled face. But soon, those days will pass and we will only be left with a final trait that will keep us alive as a nation – laughter and humour.

I know this column is supposed to be based on making fun of ourselves, but I just want to tell you that this is possibly the only tradition left if we don't keep our identity alive by handing down values and passing around what little knowledge is left of our past and where we come from. It won't be funny when our culture will be homeless, without a people to keep it alive.

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A gathering of leaders Education is a cornerstone for a successful future

Story and photos by Akiva Levitas

Billed by the Aboriginal Finance Officers Association (AFOA) as the first time five former national chiefs appeared on the same stage, a much touted panel served as a capstone for this year's national conference held in Montreal.

From February 16-18, the AFOA brought together thousands for workshops and panels discussing the present and future of Aboriginal communities across North America.

The featured panel on the final day – moderated by former Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin – consisted of Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, Matthew Coon Come, Phil Fontaine, Ovide Mercredi and George Erasmus.

Martin got some push back as the intros began, but he was lenient with the five-minute rule. "I was not going to stop you from talking, if you kept going on about Kelowna," Martin jokingly said about the doomed funding accord he signed with Canada's First Nations shortly before his government was defeated in 2005.

The leaders went on to share their personal experiences in their role as national chief of the Assembly of First Nations and their insights on current issues. "It's an amazing time in this country right now," Mercredi stated in his opening. "There is hope now – that was gone for a decade."

Much of the discussion shared this hope since the return of the Liberal Party to power in last fall's federal election. Promises of greater cooperation between the federal government and First Nations has led to high expectations.

Top to bottom: Shawn A-in-chut Atleo as he presents his experiences, Paul Martin introducing the panel, Phil Fontaine speaking about his time as National Chief.



"Our challenge is to provide the tools to ensure that our communities are habitable," Coon Come said in his closing, "so that they can be healthy environments for our children to lead successful, productive lives."

Coon Come's remarks drew attention to four high school students listening intently only a few feet away from the stage. They were invited as a part of the 2016 PotashCorp Aboriginal Youth Financial Management Award, chosen for their winning essays. The four were Jacqueline Hamill of Lax Kw'alaams Band in British Columbia; Julian Marshall of the Membertou First Nation in Nova Scotia; Jocelyn Pagée of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Erickson Owen of the Poplar Hill First Nation in Ontario.

Owen stood out for achieving a perfect 100% average in his first semester of Grade 12 courses. He decided to show his fellow classmates what could be achieved from diligent studying after reading about another student with a perfect average in the Toronto Star. His determination even resulted in him turning down trips to focus on his studying.

In the end though, it was not his grades that brought him to the AFOA conference, it was his winning essay. With dreams of working in finance, his paper explored how Owen draws his inspiration from past First Nations leaders such as Atleo and business leaders like Bill Gates.

As he concluded his speech, Coon Come gestured towards the four students, but his message



Erickson Owen, student with perfect grades, walking out of the conference room with the former National Chiefs

was directed at all First Nations youth. "The greatest story has not been told; the greatest film has not been filmed; the greatest song has not been sung," he said. "I believe in you, young people, to write your own history."



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No show

Opponents of controversial Inuit film confront screening organizer

by Jesse Staniforth

The weather was thawing, so it seemed like a good night for a dialogue. But film director Dominic Gagnon never arrived as expected to a scheduled public discussion of his controversial documentary *of the North*.

Earlier on March 9, Montreal independent film society, Ciné-Club La Banque, had cancelled its scheduled free screening of the “mash-up version” of Gagnon’s film, which consists of self-shot clips the director found uploaded on YouTube and pornographic websites that frequently put Inuit people in an embarrassing light.

In response to demands by parties demanding the removal of their videos and songs from the film, Gagnon had taken some of the footage out at the last minute. For a variety of reasons Ciné-Club did not wish to screen that version, however. Instead, they invited Gagnon, Iqaluit Inuk filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (a prominent critic of the film, in Montreal working on a new film) and Montreal Inuk researcher, radio host and filmmaker Stephen Agluvak Puskas Puskas to discuss the issue in a public setting.

Citing threats to his safety, Gagnon declined the invitation and the event was cancelled.

That didn’t keep people from coming, however – those who wanted to see the film, and didn’t know it was cancelled, and a group of its detractors. Outside the theatre they encountered event organizer Emmanuel Sévigny, leading to an impromptu discussion. Zoé Lavocat, originally from France, had come to see the film and expressed surprise on learning that it contained footage of and from people who had not consented for their videos to be in it. She wondered if the film was legal.

“No one ever asked the Inuit, never consulted with the Inuit to make it,” said Montreal Inuk filmmaker Isabella Weetaluktuk. “Festivals are showing it without ever trying to ask Inuit, ‘Is this okay?’ It’s not okay to make a film about Inuit or any other culture without ever talking to those people.”

Sévigny argued the film was by an artist with a body of earlier work that was critically acclaimed, and he said he believed artists were able to be sensitive to cultures other than their own.



Puskas pointed out that all critics so far have taken the film at face value as a portrait “of the North.” When he combed carefully through the credits, Puskas discovered that nearly a third of the film – which Gagnon had described as being about Inuit self-representation – came from the South.

“It’s a good idea to have artists who have a point-of-view from outside a culture, that’s not a problem,” he said.

Arnaquq-Baril said she agreed with this – but in this case, her problem was that Gagnon had never met the people he was portraying in such a controversial manner.

“Even the concept of making a film without having ever met the people is interesting,” said Arnaquq-Baril. “But the thing is, he hasn’t done it honestly. He’s using clips of non-Inuit and portraying them as Inuit. He’s lying with his editing. He put footage in of non-Inuit in Texas and Florida making alcohol and fighting, and edited them in a way where it appears Inuit are violent drunks. It’s completely irresponsible to a people who are marginalized in this country.”

At the end of the discussion, Sévigny said he would no longer screen the film. Arnaquq-Baril, Puskas and Weetaluktuk shook hands with Sévigny before they parted ways.



MoCreebec Eeyoud

STATEMENT FROM MOCREEBEC EYUOD COUNCIL

Regarding the
Grand Council of the Crees (of Eeyou Istchee) Statement
Of Claim Of Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights In
"Ontario"



We welcome the thought of addressing long standing unresolved issues regarding the "Ontario/Quebec" border and the rights of Eeyoud directly affected within these areas.

We can only hope and pray that all parties concerned will seek and strive to work together in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill toward a mutual commitment in protecting and advancing indigenous land rights for all Cree.

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MoCreebec has come a long way since the association was established back in 1980. MoCreebec offers a variety of programs and services designed to serve the MoCreebec community, in areas such as health, housing, employment, education, and communication.

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Waswanipi delegation travels to west coast

The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi met with counterparts in British Columbia the first week of March to learn how to best protect their forests in the Broadback region.

The meetings came a week after the official signing of the agreement leading to the Great Bear Rainforest (Forest Management) Act. The agreement protects 85% of one of the world's most important temperate rainforests. It was introduced into BC legislature the day before the meetings.

"We thank the First Nations who met with us and shared their vision for the Great Bear Rainforest," said Waswanipi Chief Marcel Happyjack, who was accompanied by Deputy Chief Mandy Gull and a six-person delegation that included Waswanipi community members, hunters, trappers and tallymen.

"We heard from one chief that the Great Bear Agreement has now resulted in as many jobs – in stewardship work – as was once created by logging. This proves that protecting forests does in fact create jobs," Happyjack added.

Happyjack hopes to soon host a visit to the Broadback region by his BC allies to obtain additional advice.

Whapmagoostui election results

John Shem was elected Deputy Chief in the March 7 band council vote. Elected band councillors include Elijah Sandy, Jacob Dick, Rita Sheshamush Mast, Ruth Mast, Rachael Kawapit, Patricia George and William Kawapit.

There will be a run-off election March 18 for Chief of the Whapmagoostui First Nation between Stanley Jason George and Louisa Wynne.

James Bay Cree takes Ontario to court

The Cree Nation Government is asking the Ontario Superior Court to recognize Cree Aboriginal title and rights in Northern Ontario.

The lawsuit seeks title on a shared basis with other First Nations over roughly 48,000 kilometres of lands south of James Bay and west of the Ontario-Quebec boundary. The Cree Nation is also claiming damages of \$495 million for past breaches relating to this territory.

"I am proud to be part of this next step in the Cree Nation's fight for the full recognition and fulfillment of our rights over our entire traditional territory," said Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come. "Our people have used, occupied, governed and protected these lands since time immemorial but our rights have never been addressed in any treaty. Our people are committed to advancing and defending our rights in Ontario, despite the provincial boundaries that have been imposed upon us."

In other news...

Family and friends of a Cree man on a healing journey in Nunavik became concerned when he didn't check in as expected recently. John Clarence Kawapit, a 46-year-old from Whapmagoostui, had misplaced his satellite phone but managed to send a "Help" message on March 7 because the walkers were running out of fuel for heating or cooking. Food supplies were also low. But Kawapit would like people to know they shouldn't be worried for his safety.

...

Rusty Cheezo of Eastmain has won \$1,025,697 playing Lotto Max, and received his oversized cheque March 8. If you're in need of a loan you can find his phone number in the 2016 James Bay Cree Phonebook.



“True to Willie’s spirit, Chez Willie is a place for brothers and sisters to come in and find a helping hand and a warm cup of coffee.”

Hope for the homeless

Willie’s Place celebrates a new location and the life of the man who inspired it

by Joshua Grant

Willie Hester’s story shows that even a homeless man with addiction problems can make a positive impact on the people around him.

Speaking after an official grand opening ceremony for the drop-in day centre named for his late father on March 1, Randal Hester recounted how Willie always wanted to come back to Val-d’Or, “no

matter how hard we tried to stop him. Now I know why, because he had a vision [for the homeless community]. I’m glad that I can see that realized today.”

It was an emotional day at the centre as intervention workers, chiefs, government ministers, media, friends and family gathered in a temporary

Some of Willie Hester's family in front of his place, including brothers Patterson and George, sisters Barbara and Shirley, sons Randal and Riley and daughters Deanna and Denisa.



tent behind the new shelter at 728 4th Avenue. The *Enquête* investigation that called into question the treatment of First Nations women by certain Val-d'Or Sûreté du Québec officers last fall mobilized many individuals and organizations to improve relations with First Nations in the different communities of the Abitibi region.

With \$280,262 allocated by the Quebec government through March 31, 2017, in the wake of the crisis, Willie's Place now has the finances it needs to operate for a full year. It will also benefit from the \$43,000 raised by the Creeco charity golf tournament in May 2015.

Lac Simon Chief Salomé Mackenzie, Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Aboriginal Minister of Affairs Geoffrey Kelley, Liberal MPs Guy Bourgeois and Luc Blanchette, and Val-d'Or mayor Pierre Corbeil all commended the actions taken by government and city officials, the Native Friendship Centre and many others in the four months following the allegations and recognized the tremendous importance of Willie's Place in the lives of the people it serves.

The drop-in spot offers not only a place to warm up, grab a coffee or enjoy a traditional meal, but also a smile, a friendly face and the chance to talk to social workers about their vari-

ous struggles. The staff is on hand seven days a week from 8 am to 10 pm to give those who frequent the shelter support to kick a drug or alcohol dependency, look for work or find a place to live. Director Sharon Hunter also noted that Chez Willie networks with several other support mechanisms for homeless people throughout the city.

"Willie wasn't alone, he made many friends along his journey," said Grand Chief Coon Come at the inauguration ceremony. "His memory lives on and we have not forgotten him. Nor have we forgotten the other men and women who are struggling right now. Who might not know what their next step is, when their next meal is or if they will be able to find shelter tonight and get out of the cold for a few hours.

"True to Willie's spirit, Chez Willie is a place for brothers and sisters to come in and find a helping hand and a warm cup of coffee," Coon Come continued. "The frontline workers, Christopher, Sharon, Coco and everyone else who comes in with the will to help someone out there or sometimes just to listen. These people are the lifeline, vital to helping their brothers and sisters back on to their feet, towards a path of recovery."

Grand Chief Coon Come speaks at the inauguration



Willie's son Randal Salt speaks to staff and friends at Willie's Place



Grand Chief Coon Come and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Geoffrey Kelley with Chez Willie's staff Coco Marcil and Christopher Stephen.





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A ribbon-untying ceremony, accompanied by singing and traditional drumming, followed the speeches. Also present were Willie Hester's brothers Patterson and George, sisters Josephine, Barbara, Shirley and her husband Bert, sons Randal and Riley, daughters Deanna and Denisa and granddaughter Layna.

"I'm very glad that my dad spoke out to help his friends who struggle in the streets and I want to continue helping people too," said Randal Hester. "It calms me a bit to know that people are going to find help now, they have this place to come to."

Friends and relatives took turns telling their stories and remembering Willie long after the visitors, media and camera crews departed. Over moose stew, rabbit, caribou and beaver, they shared memories of Willie's compassion and his love to laugh, recalling the connection he had to Val-d'Or and the people with whom he roamed the streets.

"When we woke up in the morning, in the park or wherever we were, Willie used to say 'I wanna ride a pony! I wanna ride a pony and Gordon wants baloney'," laughed old friend Gordon Kanatewat.

"To me he used to say, 'Let's get married! Let's get married tonight and get divorced in the morning!'" exclaimed former bartender-turned-social worker Carole "Coco" Marcil.

"My dad loved to joke around," Randal Hester observed. "I wonder what he would say right now. To make everyone laugh I think he would say, 'Now they want to create something, after I'm gone.'"

"But seriously, he would be thankful," Randal added. "Thankful that we're helping out everybody in the streets, his friends. And not just us now but into the future, we don't know where our grandchildren might be in the future."

Tears and laughter marked the occasion that commemorated the uniqueness of Willie's life and the contribution he made in raising awareness of the difficult situations faced by so many Natives who arrive in the city.

Hanging on the wall just inside the entrance is a framed photo of Willie next to a poem entitled "My Dearest Late Friend," written by Adrian Herodier. Adrian is another of Willie's old companions who knows the



realities of life in the streets of Val-d'Or all too well.

Thanks to Willie and the efforts of Christopher Stephen, Coco Marcil, Benoit Theoret, Annick Julien, Etienne Gignac, Lillian and Hilary Icebound, coordinator Sharon Hunter of the Native Friendship Centre and many other individuals and organizations, the homeless community of Val-d'Or once-again has a place they can call their own.

"We're giving them direction and the chance to prove to themselves that they're capable of having change in their lives," affirmed Stephen.

"It's not just about being there for them [providing a service] it's also about caring and having compassion for all individuals, Native or otherwise. We want the people in the streets of Val-d'Or to know that there's always hope for them here at Willie's Place."

THE ART OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS



Outside picture: left to right standing: Katie Green (program director), Cassandra Markey (teacher, kinda of crouched), Sara Gunner, Melissa-Ann Ledo (program director), Angelie Shecapio, Angel Baribeau, Teddy Shecapio, Kim McDougall Wapachee - Left to right kneeling: Classic Roots, Iskwé, Trey Turner

Mikw Chiyâm high-school arts residencies off to a good start in Mistissini

by Joshua Grant

The Cree School Board launched an arts residency program for high school students at Mistissini's Voyageur Memorial School in September. Dubbed the Mikw Chiyâm project, the program is a collaboration between N'we Jinan Records founder David Hodges and CSB director general Serge Béliveau. The two have teamed up with Art Education masters students Katie Green and Melissa-Ann Ledo to develop and implement the new curriculum with hopes of eventually expanding to other communities.

Mikw Chiyâm means to "move forward without hesitation." The program consists of four intensive, seven-week residencies for students from Secondary 1 to 4 aimed at increasing student retention by promoting Cree and individual identity through artistic expression. Successful applicants explore a different form of art each school term – music, visual arts, drama/multimedia and dance.

Established artists in various artistic media visit schools to work with students throughout each session. Chris Robertson, a screen printer, painter and designer,



Serge Béliveau, Katie Green, Angel Baribeau (student), Kimmy Wapachee (student), David Hodges, Melissa-Ann Ledo, Kim Quinn

“It’s about having fun, but learning while you’re doing it. Creating art keeps you focused on positive values and it boosts your self-esteem. You and the people around you have the opportunity to benefit from the energy you create.”

joined fellow painter, sculptor and DJ Jamie Bradbury at Voyageur Memorial to guide students through an exploration of visual arts during the fall. Mikw Chiyâm’s second term looked at songwriting, recording and musical production with DJ/producer Classic Roots (a.k.a. Joshua Deperry) and popular singer/songwriter IsKwé. Each cycle culminates in an arts showcase, where the students share or perform their productions with the rest of their community.

According to Hodges, Béliveau deserves most of the credit for getting the project off the ground.

“This was all Serge Béliveau’s idea really,” Hodges said in an interview with *the Nation*. “He has a big background in art concentration implementation and when he started working in Eeyou Istchee he saw that there wasn’t any arts concentration programming. He and Kim Quinn [CSB Director of School Operations] were sitting in front of me on an Air Creebec flight and overheard me talking to Nik Keca, the director of Recording Arts of Canada. I was sort of going off about N’we Jinan and all my dreams, saying I’d like to plant a studio in every school in Quebec.”

Béliveau and Hodges both laughed when they recalled the chance encounter flying from Chisasibi to Val-d'Or. After landing, Béliveau approached the artist and asked him if he'd be interested in working with the Cree School Board.

"He came up to me and was like, 'Who are you?'" Hodges exclaimed. "I told him about N'we Jinan and gave him and Kim a CD to listen to on their drive to Montreal."

Shortly after Hodges sat down for a preliminary meeting with Béliveau and Quinn. He was given six months to come up with the framework for Mikw Chiyâm. He immediately set to work finding the right people to make the project a reality.

"There were only two people I could think of," Hodges said. "Melissa-Ann Ledo, who was working at the Montreal English School Board, and Katie Green, the director of En Masse Pour Les Masses, a Montreal black-and-white mural collective."

Initially only Green responded. But she insisted she could only make it work with one other person – Melissa-Ann Ledo.

"I was like, 'Are you kidding me?'" Hodges laughed. "I didn't even know that they knew each other!"

With two experts in arts education on board, Hodges, Green and Ledo signed a contract with the CSB and the team got to work designing the Mikw Chiyâm curriculum. Once the initial framework was submitted to the principals of each Eeyou Istchee school at a meeting in Whapmagoostui, a call was put out for those interested in having the program implemented into their curriculum.

Willie J. Happyjack Memorial in Waswanipi, James Bay Eeyou in Chisasibi and Voyageur Memorial in Mistissini all applied, with the option of choosing which art forms they would like to have offered to their students. Only one of the three schools could be selected for the pilot project and based on the eagerness and readiness of Voyageur Memorial, which wanted to implement all four art programs, Mistissini was chosen to kick things off.

So far things are going well but Hodges, his team and the CSB are all looking for ways to improve.



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Left to right standing: Angel Baribeau, Ann-Margaret Blacksmith, Myra Shecapio, Cassandra Markey (teacher), Jamie Bradbury (artist), Julian Loon, Kim McDougall Wapachee, Danielle Swallow - Left to right kneeling: Chris Robertson (artist), Hannah Desgagnes, Trey Turner

"There was a lot of initial excitement," said Hodges. "But it's still a pilot project and there have been some ups and downs. The first term in visual arts was very successful, but we lost a few students in the second term with music production."

The team is monitoring students based on how they're performing, their attendance, how they're doing in the program compared to other classes and in previous years.

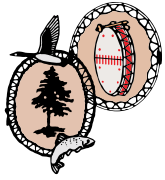
Béliveau says the initial impact is positive. He stressed that the students involved need to be reminded that Mikw Chiyâm is about preparing for the future and developing the skills that will allow them to realize their own identity while expressing themselves in a positive way.

"What's important is to help students understand how to project themselves into the future with the things they're learning," he said. "It's about having fun, but learning while you're doing it.

Creating art keeps you focused on positive values and it boosts your self-esteem. You and the people around you have the opportunity to benefit from the energy you create."

Ultimately Béliveau would like all schools in Eeyou Istchee to develop concentration programs, including arts, science or sports.

"[Mikw Chiyâm] students are learning to appreciate who they are; how they can contribute in their own environment but also finding their own voice," he emphasized. "They're building talents they already have or sometimes discovering talents they may not have even known about. It's allowed them to become taller, reassured and self-confident in their abilities and we have statistics that show improved attendance and better overall marks. When that happens you're already becoming a young role model in your immediate community."



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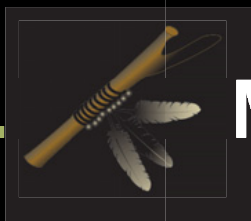
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Leaving it all on the ice

**The Nation speaks with
major-junior rookie Adam
Cheezo in the dressing room**

by Joshua Grant



Adam settles back on the bench after a quick shift, Charlotte Cheezo with her son Adam post-game, the Foreurs settle in for a face-off in their defensive zone

The current great hockey hope from Eeyou Istchee, 17-year-old Adam Cheezo of Eastmain, recently rejoined the Val-d'Or Foreurs after suffering a medial collateral ligament (MCL) injury midway through his rookie season in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL). *The Nation* had the chance to see Cheezo play on March 1 at the Centre Air Creebec in Val-d'Or when the Foreurs took on their bitter rivals the Huskies of Rouyn-Noranda.

Cheezo didn't see many minutes in the penalty-ridden game, but when he did play he was calm and collected on the ice. He was strong on his skates and his best scoring chances were when he was in tight near the net. A quick skater, Cheezo strides around the rink effortlessly and shows great positional awareness. With his level of composure he should see an increased role with the team as he develops into an older, more mature hockey player.



Charlotte Cheezo with her son Adam post-game.

Val-d'Or stormed out of the gate and dominated most of the first period, going up 1-0 on the first power play opportunity of the game when Anthony Beauregard tipped in a Nicolas Aubé-Kubel slap shot. Only 1:30 later Jan Mandat made it 2-0 for the Foreurs, smashing home a beautiful one timer from François Beauchemin.

After killing off a 5-on-3 power play, Val-d'Or's Anthony Beauregard scored his second of the game on a floating wrist shot from the point. In the second period, Mathieu Nadeau chipped the puck to Julien



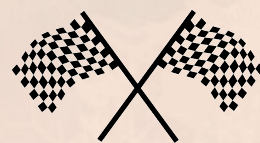
The Cree Nation of Mistissini is proud to announce and congratulate the winners of the recent Cross Country Snowmobile race hosted by the town of Chibougamau as part of the **50th Edition of the FESTIVAL FOLIFRETS 2016.**

Mistissini was honored to have had winners of the Pro and Sport Divisions, it is with pride that we acknowledge and offer our congratulatory wishes to our youth,



Mr. Silas Neeposh

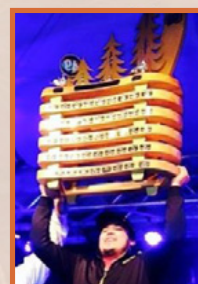
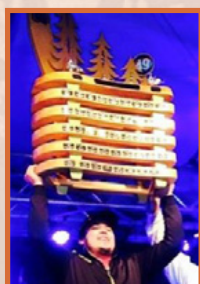
(champion of the Sport Division)



Mr. Nigel Gunner

(champion of the Pro Division)

We also wish to congratulate all others incredible competitors from Mistissini in this year's race, and look forward to next year's competitors.





The Foreurs settle in for a face-off in their defensive zone

Gauthier and Gauthier ripped a wrister into the top left corner to make it 4-0.

An interference penalty followed by a slash and a broken stick gave Val-d'Or a 5-on-3 advantage. The first of the penalized players was racing back onto the ice when the Foreurs strung together several cross-ice passes that led to a one-timer slam dunk by Shawn Ouellette-St-Amant to give Val-d'Or a seemingly insurmountable 5-0 lead.

Then Rouyn-Noranda's Jean-Christophe Beaudin got things started for the Huskies on the power play to make it 5-1. The Huskies then took advantage of the open ice on an ensuing 4-on-4 and Francis Perron scored from in close to draw the visitors within three. An Alexis Pepin tripping penalty gave the Huskies yet another power play where Beaudin notched his second and all of sudden it was a two-goal game.

Things got worse for the Foreurs in the third as the Huskies needed only 17 seconds to pull within one goal thanks to a Timo Meier one timer on yet another penalty kill. Rouyn really poured it on in the third and managed to tie it up when a failed clearing attempt gave Peter Abbandonato the opportunity to break in, stickhandle past a couple defenders, send Montpetit the wrong way with a head fake and slide the puck into the net.

The Foreurs' Aubé-Kubel had a golden opportunity to take back the lead with 1:30 remaining but his shot from the slot rang off the post. A late penalty to David Henley meant that Val-d'Or went into the 4-on-4 overtime down a man and just 43 seconds into the five minutes of extra time Meier of the Huskies took a pass on the right hash marks and one timed it into the top right corner for his game-winning second goal. Foreurs players and fans looked on in disbelief as Rouyn-Noranda's had scored six goals unanswered, four on the power play.

While it was a scrappy and entertaining affair, the night ended in a tough loss for the home team who trailed Rouyn-Noranda by only a few points for first place in the overall standings at the time.

Post game with Adam and Charlotte Cheezo

The mood in the Foreurs dressing room was one of quiet frustration and anger following the narrow defeat to the team's enemies from the neighbouring town. After being directed behind a set of curtains on the far side of room, the Nation asked Cheezo what he felt cost his team the victory.

"We had some bad penalties during the game and the other team had some pretty lucky bounces," he said. "[For the rest of the season] we'll have to just play as a team and see how it goes from there."

For many young Crees, Cheezo is a role model and a source of inspiration. Since the age of 13 he's been away from home pursuing his dream of playing hockey at a competitive level.

"He's going too far now," laughed his mother Charlotte, who used to go and see every single one of Adam's games until he was drafted by the Foreurs. "I can't follow him all the way to Montreal or anything like that." Charlotte drove in from Eastmain to see her son play that night and was heading back to her home community right after speaking with *the Nation*.

"I just want him to have fun and be the Adam I know," she said addressing her hopes for Adam and his hockey career. "I hope a lot of kids back home follow in his footsteps."

Equally calm and composed in person as he is on the ice, Cheezo says he's more concerned about having fun playing hockey than he is with the pressure and expectations people may place on his shoulders as a Cree athlete achieving success outside of Eeyou Istchee.

"I just play hockey and I love the sport," Cheezo said. "You have to make a lot of sacrifices – leaving home, leaving your friends behind, getting up in the morning, training, going hard every day. It's tough but I love it."

Room to grow

With one goal and one assist over 26 games with the Foreurs, Cheezo isn't the team's highest scorer but he has plenty of time to grow. QMJHL players can compete until the age of 21 in the hopes of garnering attention from scouts at either the semi-pro or professional level.

Watching him play it was clear that Cheezo is comfortable and relaxed on the ice and has a good understanding of the game. His injury took longer than expected to heal, but gave him some time back in Eastmain. Now that he's fully recovered Cheezo says he's working hard to be the best player he can be.

"It's going great experiencing the junior league and it's pretty fun," he said. "I had to go home for a bit and slowly recover then come back but I've been working hard off the ice and on the ice trying to do my best [to get back into shape]."

Since the difficult home loss to Rouyn-Noranda, Val-d'Or rebounded with away wins against the Baie-Comeau Drakkar and the Chicoutimi Saguenéens before suffering another setback away against Rouyn-Noranda. The last game of the season before playoffs is scheduled for March 18 in Gatineau.



Browning Buck Mark Rifle

Checking out the options

Montreal's Hunting, Fishing and Camping Show lays out new gear

by William Nicholls

The annual Hunting, Fishing and Camping Show is a must-see for anyone interested in the outdoors. Not only do you get to see and compare the latest products, exclusive in-show specials can save you a few dollars. I still wear my waterproof fall/winter running shoes from last year's show. At \$50 instead of \$100-plus, it was a great bargain as most running shoes just last a season at the best these days.

It's nice to see that the industry is really stepping up with bush wear and

other products for the ladies. Different body shapes need different designs to ensure the best fit and comfort possible.

Talking to the gun companies' spokespeople during the February 18-21 exhibition at Place Bonaventure in Montreal, they all agreed there wasn't much new in the way of technology or weapons this year. Most of it was redesign and appearance. Like a wood stock instead of Camo plastic, for instance.

Browning though had a Buck Mark Rifle, based on the popular Buck Mark Pistol. Basically they lengthened the barrel and added a stock to it. The Browning Buck Mark Rifle is one of the most unique .22 LR rimfires ever produced. It provides outstanding accuracy, dependable blowback operation, a crisp single-action trigger pull and magazine. I was impressed by the lightweight, compact design. It comes to the shoulder fast and I sighted onto a chosen target faster than I ever have





with other 22 LR rifles. This would be a great addition to any hunter's gun collection, useful for taking with you on the skidoo and spring goose hunt. In fact, it would be a great gun for any time of the year and something to train the youngsters on. It costs under \$1000, and one model is only \$700.

And for that goose hunt a four-pack of goose decoys is around \$154.74. A 12-pack of geese is \$265.94. A 12-pack of Snow Goose decoys is \$237.85. A six-pack of mallard decoys will run you \$59.63. All available at Le Baron. Ammo Cans were only \$12.45. For those of you who had frostbitten behinds last spring, I recommend the Heat-A-Seat. then you can tell the other hunters that you have a hot booty.

If you are impatient to hunt geese this spring, you can always go to Saint Eugene in Ontario. Micheal La Haye can be reached at 613-674-1816. The photos at the booth depicted a successful hunt for many hunters who bagged their limit.

With over 250 eagerly staffed booths of various sizes, it was a feast of potential. Opportunities abounded that astounded sightseers. But you would see a change when something different and interesting caught their eye. The show was living up to its theme of "Novelty."

I loved the Eccotemp outdoor-use-only portable tankless water heater. Another Eccotemp product promises instant, endless hot water anywhere. That's at www.eccotemp.com if a warm shower or bath or other is to your

liking. Ask the wife or should the wife ask you?

Another great item was the flameless cooking system from Cook Solution. Just add water and you're cooking. This would be great for heating up your meal at the hunting blind or while you're on a boat just to name two immediate uses. It's a must for those days when the firewood is all wet. Check out www.cooksolution.ca for all your questions.

Camo Croc were a minor novelty, but not at \$25 a pair. I'll wait for the cheaper knock-offs as the same factory usually does both. Then Disney and Marvel hit the scene. I thought I was safe as I wasn't at Provigo where almost every aisle has a child's toy. Then this pops up. Three fishing rod sets featuring Olaf



Happy Goose Break

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Eastmain:	819-977-2400
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Nemaska:	819-673-2400
Ouje-bougoumou:	418-745-2260
Waskaganish:	819-895-2126
Waswanipi:	819-753-2770
Wemindji:	819-978-3300
Whapmagoostui:	819-929-3796

If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact the Correctional Services Regional Office in Val d'or at 819-874-2600 or by email at justice.valdor@cngov.ca.

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You can also enter the contest at



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[front] and the Blonde princess [a partial last on the right] from Frozen, the Disney Princesses model and lastly Marvel's Spiderman set. Yes they are cute, but I might want something a little better than what they were offering.

One cool item was the Tetra-POD. There are two types – off road for your ATV and on road for your truck or car. This is an enclosed trailer that becomes a boat. Mind you it's a small boat rated for only two people and a 3-HP motor. But this would be great for those small lakes and rivers in Eeyou Istchee. It clocks in at around \$3000.

If that's too expensive, there's the one-man pontoon boat from Oswego for \$700 for the loner. If you want more for those hard-to-reach places, it's the six-person Zodiac-style Brig for \$2242. Rated for a 25-HP motor, it even has a sunshade for those hot sunny days. You'll be able to fish the areas the big boys stay away from with this baby.

But one of my favourites is the trout pond. I know I'll get razzed about this, but this is where my son Hunter hooked his first fish. His excitement will lead to a fishing trip this year on Mistissini Lake. In addition to getting your children hooked on fishing, the trout pond gives part of the profits to fund Foundation Interactive Hochelaga Maisonneuve's program to send less fortunate kids for a day's fishing at Trudeau's



Outfitter in Saint-Zénon. Spend \$5 to catch one fish or \$12 for three. That's fresh fish for supper and cheap at the price. Food always tastes better when you work for it and isn't it time that a small boy takes pleasure in feeding the family.

Mistissini Tourism's Andrew Coon was on hand to promote fishing on the largest natural lake in Quebec. He expects more American clients to return this year as the US dollar is much higher than the Canadian loonie. That's good news for Cree Outfitters who had seen a downturn in bookings.

One item that caught my eye was the Cosy Bubble. Easy to set up in no time at all – they say less than 20 minutes. The space is amazing but what stands out is the windows. It makes it a mini-house that looks and feels good. Check out this Made-in-Quebec beauty online at www.cosy-bubble.com.

These hunting, fishing and camping shows are wonderful to check out and compare the decisions every hunter or fisherperson has to make.

By the way, don't forget my hunting tip: put a condom over the tip of your gun barrel when it's raining. Just as with its other, recommended usage, this will stop rust from forming inside your barrel.

Safe hunting this year and maybe I'll see you on the lake when I go fishing.





Getting good water qualities

My favourite drink is water (nipi in Cree). Just plain old water is my choice for quenching my thirst. Water is life giving and without it we would not survive long. As a matter of fact although a person can survive about a month without food, death would occur in less than a week without water. We really need water as it transports nutrients in our body and is necessary for circulation. Clean daily water intake may actually reduce the risk of getting some cancers.

We drink a lot of water and that is a good idea. The suggested water intake for a person is about eight cups a day. If you really overdo it and drink way too much water you can actually get intoxicated and poisoned by it. Most of us get more than eight cups a day because we drink beverages like coffee, tea, juice and soft drinks, which of course contain mostly water.

Amazingly our bodies are made up of about 70% water. That means we are almost totally constructed of water but we rarely think about that. Although 75% of the earth is covered in water, we can't use much of it and we get most of our water from aquifers underground that hold the most water on the planet.

Most of us get our water from public utilities in towns and cities. This water is treated with chemicals and filtered before it reaches our taps at home. There have been incidents where the water systems have been contaminated and that has made

people sick and in some cases led to fatalities. In May 2000, the town of Walkerton, Ontario experienced a tragic problem with E.coli contamination, which resulted in five fatalities and 2,500 people got sick. Cities and towns do their best to make our drinking water safe but it is a constant struggle and challenge to maintain safe and healthy water distribution.

Incredibly most of the populated world and mainly Third World countries do not provide clean and safe water to their people. When I traveled to Asia and Europe I was always warned not to drink the tap water in most countries and to not even use it to brush my teeth. At times, even when I showered in some Third World countries, I was aware that the water could be contaminated and unhealthy. We take clean and safe water for granted here in Canada when amazingly most people on the planet don't have that luxury.

When I was young and living in Attawapiskat we got our water from the river and had to fetch it in buckets. In the winter we had to maintain a hole in the ice in the main channel of the river to have access to drinking water. There was always regular traffic of people in the community going back and forth to fill their buckets with water all year around. The community had to rely on this manner of getting fresh drinking water until the 1990s.

Imagine, while most people in Canada had enjoyed the luxury of running water and toilets in their homes for about 100 years or so, we

only got those services in the 1990s. Incredibly, even after a water facility was put in, there were so many problems with the quality it resulted in many people continuing to fetch their water from the river. When I moved south to cities and towns like Timmins, North Bay and Iroquois Falls, it was great to be able to have clean water to drink at anytime right from the tap.

These days I am getting very picky about the water I drink. I don't like a heavy chlorine taste and in particular when it is obvious in my coffee and tea. I have been buying a lot of bottled water because I don't like the taste of tap water in just about any city or town I visit. The problem is that I have been paying a lot for bottled water and when it comes to the small-size throwaway plastic containers the result is a ton of garbage. Some of this plastic is recycled but much of it ends up in landfill. That definitely cannot be a good thing.

Recently, I decided to purchase and install an inline water filtration system to make my home tap water better in quality and to stop me from buying bottled water. These days, there are several options for water filtration systems for your home. They are cheap and easy to install. Now I am confident in my drinking water and I am saving a lot of money as I don't purchase bottled water anymore. Also, I am not creating huge amounts of plastic garbage. I do love my water.

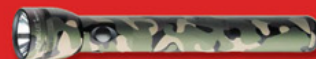


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